CSU Experiential Learning

Bring Learning to Life

Experiential learning emphasizes learning through direct experience and active engagement. It involves practical, hands-on activities and real-life situations that allow individuals to learn by doing, reflecting, and applying their knowledge in meaningful ways. The learner has opportunities to experiment, make decisions, and face the consequences of those decisions. Individuals learn best when they are actively engaged in an authentic learning experience that relates to their personal interests and goals. It promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, teamwork, and communication skills, as well as a deeper sense of ownership and responsibility for one's learning.

Experiential learning opportunities are a meaningful way to build **CSU Career Competencies** which are transferable knowledge employers highly value across all industries.

Foundational CSU Experiential Learning Opportunities

- Paid
- Unpaid
- Paid or Unpaid
- To earn academic credit, departmental approval is required

Internships

Allow students to apply classroom knowledge in a professional setting, develop practical skills, and learn more about jobs and industries of interest. Often in a specified timeframe, such as the summer, semester, or academic year.

Research

Enables students to make a contribution to the discipline by exploring an issue of interest and communicating those results to others. Typically, under the mentorship of a faculty advisor.

On-Campus Employment

Takes place at a CSU affiliated worksite. Flexible with class schedules and convenient as it is designed with students in mind. Part-time and temporary employment. Students can be hired as student hourly or work-study employees.

Strategies for finding Experiential Learning Opportunities:

- ☐ ***Visit the Career Center early and often***
- ☐ ***Attend Career Events***
- ☐ ***Take a look at Handshake***
- ☐ ***Join a student club or organization***
- ☐ ***Build connections with Faculty and Academic Success Coordinator (ASC) by attending office hours and asking questions about undergraduate research and ways to get engaged as a student***

CAREER CENTER
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Additional Experiential Learning Opportunities

(Common Industries)

Field Work –
(Natural Resources, Agriculture)

The collection of data or information outside of an experimental resource or lab setting. This type of data collection is most often conducted in natural settings or environments. These experiences may be mentored.

Student Teaching –
(Education)

A semester long professional assignment to a particular school under the supervision of a classroom teacher and/or faculty mentor. It involves a specified number of hours of teaching that is required for teacher certification. ***CSU Center for Educator Preparation.***

Entrepreneurship –

Entrepreneurs take an idea or product and start a business based around it. ***CSU Institute for Entrepreneurship***.

Externship –

A temporary training program in the workplaces, often offered to students as part of a course of study. Externships give students special experience and exposure to a job, company, or industry. Externs are often not given assignments or projects. Instead, they are given the chance to observe through shadowing opportunities and ask questions of company employees.

Micro-internships –

Short-term (5-40 hours total) professional projects that are like those given to new hires or interns. Micro-Internships are facilitated via the Parker Dewey platform, which connects students with organizations in need of support. ***Parker Dewey Micro-Internships***

Service Learning –

Is a course designed to move students beyond the classroom and into their community. This is usually done through a service that is created to apply course content to community-based activities.

Education Abroad –

An opportunity to pursue academic goals in a different country, gain global perspective, and enhance cultural understanding. ***CSU's Education Abroad Office***.

Campus Involvement–

Participation in campus-affiliated activities such as clubs and organizations. Student organizations are a way for students to find a community with others that share common interests, learn more about their career field, make a difference on campus, and step into leadership roles. ***RamLink***.

Apprenticeship -
(Skilled Trades, Manufacturing)

An opportunity for someone to learn an art, trade or job by working under a certified expert. This is a system for training a new generation of practitioners with on-the-job training.

Volunteer/ Community Service –

Is a way to serve an organization or community cause through your time and skills.

Practicum/Field Placement –
(Health, Human Services, Education)

Provides students with practical experience in their field of study. It is intended to support student skill development, while contributing to community needs. Often built into curriculum and required for graduation for certain degree programs (public health, counseling/psychology,etc).

Contract Employment (I.e. Project-Based Employment, Freelance, & Gigs) –

A job, especially one that is temporary or freelance and performed on an informal or on-demand basis. Industries that often have gig work include the music, entertainment, creative, and tech fields.

Fellowship –
(Research, Scholarship, Science, Public Sector)

An opportunity to pursue academic goals in a different country, gain global perspective, and enhance cultural understanding. ***CSU's Education Abroad Office***.

Cooperative Education (Co-op) -

Either full-time (40 hours per week) alternating periods (semester) of work and school or part-time (20 hours per week) combining work and school during the same time period.